1:Dobrizhoffer M-5 (ca. 1760) 1822
SI4 Abipon SI4
GUARANI SI4

piece of white cotton, both in and out of doors, but dishevelled and flowing when they attend divine service. The Spanish peasantry also approach the door of the church with their hair tied in the military fashion, but loosen it on entering. Indeed, all the Americans are persuaded that this is a mark of reverence due to the sacred edifice.

As soon as they wake in the morning, the Abiponian women, sitting on the ground, dress, twist, and tie their husbands' hair. A bundle of boar's bristles, or of hairs out of a tamandua's tail, serves them for a comb. You very seldom see an Indian with natural, never with artificial curling hair. They do not grow grey till very late, and then not unless they are decrepid; very few of them get bald. It is worth while to mention a ridiculous custom of the Abipones, Mocobios, Tobas, &c. all of whom, without distinction of age or sex, pluck up the hair from the forehead to the crown of the head, so that the fore part of the head is bald almost for the space of two inches: this baldness they call *nalemta*, and account a religious mark of their nation. New-born infants have the hair of the fore part of their head cut off by a male or female juggler, these knaves performing the offices both of physicians and priests amongst them. This custom seems to me to have

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A 302 852 [171] been derived from the Peruvian Indians, who used to cut their children's first hair, at two years of age, with a sharp stone for want of a A [553] knife. The ceremony was performed by the relations, one after another, according to the degrees of consanguinity; and at the same time a name was given to the infant.

A 589 765 It is also a custom, amongst the Abipones, to shave the heads of widows, not without much lamentation on the part of the women, and drinking on that of the men; and to cover them with a grey and black hood, made of the threads of the caraquatà, which it is reckoned a crime for her to take off till she marries again. A widower has his hair cropped with many ceremonies, and his head covered with a little net-shaped hat, which is not taken off till the hair grows again. All the men cut off their hair to mourn for the death of a Cacique. Amongst Gu [68] the Christian Guaranies, it is thought a most shameful and ignominious punishment, when any disreputable woman has her hair cut off. I have described the person which liberal nature has bestowed upon the Abipones; it now remains for me to show by what means they disfigure it.

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CHAPTER XX.

GAMES ON THE BIRTH OF THE MALE CHILD OF A CACIQUE.

The love implanted in the minds of all nations towards their prince never shows itself more clearly than when the birth of an heir is announced. Festive fires, theatrical games, joyous acclamations, songs, paintings, sculpture, elegant dances, and various other things attest the public joy. This custom of the Europeans, the savage and warlike Abipones in their fashion imitate. They make public show of rejoicing for some days, when informed of the birth of a Cacique's son. As soon as a report is spread of the birth of the son of a Cacique, the whole crowd of girls, bearing palm boughs in their hands, repair to the house of the infant amid festive acclamations; they run round the roof and sides of it, shaking the palm boughs, by which percussion they happily augur that the child will become famous in war, and the scourge of his enemies. The use of the palms, and the other ceremonies which follow all have relation to this. The strongest of the women is covered from the loins to the legs, with a sort

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of apron made of the longer ostrich feathers. 852
That woman has every day the most business to 622
perform; for in company with the other girls, [237
she visits all the huts, and with a hide, twisted 292]
in the form of Hercules's club, whips, puts to
flight, and pursues all the men that she finds in
every house, and those that are met by the way
are soundly beaten by the girls, with the palm
boughs. The first day is passed in this running
up and down, amidst the laughter of the flagel-
lated men. Next day the girls, who are distri- [526]
buted into bands, wrestle with one another,
and the boys do the same in a separate place.
On the third day they are called out to dance, [535]
the boys on one side, and the girls on the other.
They all join hands till a circle is formed, an [534]
old woman, the directress of the dance going
round striking a gourd: and when after a whirl-
ing for some time, they grow giddy, they rest
at intervals, and then renew their dancing,
which contains nothing worthy of admiration,
but the patience displayed on the part both of
the spectators and of the performers, and is
perfectly devoid of art. On the fourth day, the [526]
woman with the apron of ostrich feathers tra-
verses the town, surrounded by girls, challeng-
ing the stoutest and strongest woman she finds
in every house, to contend with her in the
street; and now throwing her adversary, now
being herself thrown, affords an
amusing spectacle to the assembled
people.

1:Dobrizhoffer M-5-(ca. 1760) 1822
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being herself thrown, affords an amusing spectacle to the assembled people. During the remaining days, (for those games last eight days,) either the former sports are renewed, or the men joyfully indulge in public drinking-parties, wherein songs are alternately sung to the sound of drum. Of the other games, on the occasion of some person's being admitted to the rank of captain, of the celebration of any signal victory, of the death of a noble, the removal of the bones of the dead, the shaving of a widow's hair, &c. we shall discourse elsewhere. Of this I am quite certain, that the Abipones Nakaiketergehes, or wood-Abipones, are much more observant of national rites and ceremonies than the rest. It is incredible what time and labour it cost us to abolish the national rites of this ferocious nation, which the example of their ancestors had hallowed in their eyes. An oak a hundred years old, which has stuck its roots deep into the ground, is not felled at a blow. But now, from nuptial and natal games, let us proceed to things of a more gloomy character, to diseases, physicians, and medicines.